# International Law *for* the Sustainable Development Goals

## Sustainable, Safe and Resilient Urban Settlements:
### The Right to the City & Urban Inclusivity

**Friday 19 October, 10:30 -17:30h**
*Faculty of Law, University of Groningen*

*The Department of Transboundary Legal Studies of the Faculty of Law of the **University of Groningen**, in-cooperation with Globalisation Studies Groningen and the Horizon 2020 Preparedness and Resilience for Urban Vulnerabilities Project (PRUV) cordially invite you to participate in **the 7th Workshop** of the 2017-2018 [Workshop Series on International Law for the Sustainable Development Goals](#) of the University of Groningen.*

# Call for Papers:

About one year after the adoption of the **UN *Sustainable Development Goals*** in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the "***The New Urban Agenda***" at its Third Conference on Human Settlements (UN HABITAT III) held on 26 December 2016 in Quito. Similar to the SDGs, *The New Urban Agenda* is grounded in international law and human rights, and it seeks to contribute 'to the implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets', including **Goal 11 on "safe, sustainable and resilient cities"**. According to the UNGA, achieving "cities for all" requires:

- universal access to **adequate, safe and affordable housing**
- universal access to **adequate, safe and affordable basic services;**
- **safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems;**
- inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for **participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management** in all countries
- mitigation and adaptation to **climate change** and **resilience to disasters**

By 2050, 68% of the world population will live in urban areas, compared to 55% today. Rapid urbanisation presents a major sustainable development challenge to many countries and cities, in its own right, and as exacerbated by conditions that render cities and their inhabitants especially vulnerable, including impacts of climate change and other natural and human-made hazards. Levels of **inequality** amongst urban dwellers can be extreme, economically, socially and environmentally, meaning that urbanisation is easily framed as an **international human rights concern**.

The *New Urban Agenda* has included the concept of "**right to the city**" in its vision of 'cities for all' (introduced by Henri Lefebvre in the 1960s). The concept is currently gaining popularity in national laws, policy practice and grassroots level activism; yet, the Agenda itself does not define it. According to some, the original meaning of the right to the city **"goes beyond basic human rights and access to resources"**, emphasizing a "**renewed access to urban life**" that empowers city dwellers to shape their cities through "**rights to participation and active civic engagement**".

# OUR FOCUS

In light of the aims of the *New Urban Agenda* and the *UN SDGs*, this workshop aims to discuss and assess the following international legal questions critically:

1) How can "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities for all" be (better) achieved by firmly grounding implementation of the *New Urban Agenda* & *SDGs* in existing international legal arrangements, including, but not exclusively, human rights law?
2) What are the role, limits, gaps or opportunities offered by existing international legal frameworks in implementing SDG 11 and the related *New Urban Agenda*?
3) Does, can and/or should international law govern cities or sub-national actors? If so, how? Have international legal regimes recognized specific rights, obligations or responsibilities of city governments or officials as sub-national actors?
4) How may international law permeate decision-making in/for cities in a multi-level governance sphere? As a related question, what is the position of cities in international law vis-à-vis the State, or vis-à-vis non-urban/rural communities?
5) Conversely, can international law learn from local practices regarding law-making and implementation?
6) What are the role, limits, gaps or opportunities offered by new (legal) concepts, such as the "*right to the city*" or a notion such as "*international urban law*", if any?

**Particular topics of interest to this call, include:**  Access to urban land and housing; access to essential services; climate resilience/adaptation and disaster management;  traffic/mobility and income; inequality, including slum dwellers;  human rights and city planning; obligations of sub-national actors or private actors in the urban sphere; implementation of international law by cities.

# SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

We invite abstract proposals from interested scholars from *all disciplines*. However, all proposals should demonstrate an explicit link to issues raised by the SDGs/Urban Agenda and engage with one or more questions above. Proposals should not exceed **500 words** in length can be sent to **Marlies Hesselman** (m.m.e.hesselman@rug.nl) and **Erna Kusumawati** (e.dyah.kusumawati@rug.nl) by **31 August 2018**. Acceptance is communicated by **7 September 2018**.

# WORKSHOP FORMAT

The programme will consist of three or four panels with paper presentations and ample space for discussion. Our workshops normally have an informal atmosphere. The workshop will start with an expert panel including presentations of key current research projects in the area of 'cities, international law and SDGs', including Horizon 2020 PRUV (University College Dublin, RuG and others), Cities of Refuge (UU/University College Roosevelt) and The Global City Project (Asser Institute, t.b.c.). This is a good opportunity for networking and academic collaboration.

For information about earlier workshops, and updates to the programme, see here.

# PUBLICATION PLANS

There is a strong interest in compiling a publication as a result of this workshop, for example in the form of an edited volume (including other contributions as well) or a Special Issue. The format and process for such a publication are to be decided at a later stage.